RAVENOUS

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"Eat to Live, Don't Live to Eat"
- Benjamin Franklin

"You Are *Who* You Eat"
-Anonymous

In 1847, the United States was a land of pioneers, of gold-starved Americans making their way west. It was a period of Manifest Destiny, the inevitability of the country extending its boundaries, stretching out its arms and consuming all the land it could.

Capt. John Boyd (Guy Pearce) has become both a "hero" and a victim during this period of relentless consumption ... in ways he could never have imagined. Boyd's journey to hell begins when an act of cowardice during a horrific Mexican-American War battle earns him banishment to a desolate military outpost, a waystation for western travelers in the barren and icy Sierra Nevada mountains in California.

Upon his arrival he is greeted by a small, motley group of soldiers, including his commanding officer, Hart (Jeffrey Jones), a man who has pretty much given up on life; Toffler (Jeremy Davies), the fort's personal emissary to the Lord; Knox (Stephen Spinella), the "doctor" who never met a bottle of whiskey he didn't like; Reich (Neal McDonough), the no-nonsense soldier of the group; and the over-medicated Cleaves (David Arquette), a cook whose meals are inspired more by peyote than culinary ambitions.

Into this cold, bleak and bizarre world staggers a stranger, Colqhoun (Robert Carlyle), a half-starved Scot who had been traveling with a group of settlers until they became snowbound. Seeking refuge in a cave, they soon ran out of food – and were forced to consume one another. Colqhoun barely escaped becoming an hors d'oeuvre himself.

Colqhoun's tale has ramifications beyond cannibalism and the will to survive. It involves an old Indian myth called Weendigo, which states that a man who eats the flesh of another steals that person's strength, spirit and very essence. His hunger becomes an insatiable craving: the more he eats, the more he wants, and the stronger he becomes. There can never be enough, and death is the only escape.

Boyd and the others soon get up close and personal with the Weendigo legend after discovering that Colqhoun holds an incredible secret, one that eventually will present Boyd with the ultimate carnivorous conundrum: whether to eat dinner or *be* dinner. It's feast or famine for this beleaguered soldier: will he die a lonely hero's death…or become a cannibalistic abomination – happy, strong and glowing with health?

Bon appetite!

FOX 2000 Pictures Presents An Adam Fields/Heyday Films Production, RAVENOUS, starring Guy Pearce, Robert Carlyle, Jeremy Davies, Jeffrey Jones, John Spencer, Stephen Spinella, Neal McDonough and David Arquette. The film was directed by Antonia Bird. It was written by Ted Griffin, and produced by Adam Fields and David Heyman. The executive producer is Tim Van Rellim, the director of photography is Anthony B. Richmond, B.S.C., the production designer is Bryce Perrin, and the film editor is Neil Farrell. Music is composed by Michael Nyman & Damon Albarn. The score is conducted by Michael Nyman.

A tale of a man faced with the prospect of becoming what – and who – he eats, RAVENOUS had its origins in an actual historical event: the Donner Pass disaster of 1846-47, in which a group of immigrants were snowbound for months en route to California. When their food ran out, some survived by eating the corpses of their fallen comrades.

The event sparked the imagination of screenwriter Ted Griffin. "I had this idea," he remembers, "that cannibalism wasn't so much a matter of survival, but was more a matter of want." Manifest Destiny, the Weendigo Indian myth, Darwin's "Survival of the Fittest" theories, westward expansion and such contemporary topics as drug addiction and self-analysis were additional themes and metaphors Griffin wished to explore. But above all, he wanted to write a piece that would scare audiences. "I hope it will be very

frightening," he explains. "I wrote in a lot of shocks and surprises that with any luck will have audiences jumping."

Griffin's script was an important attraction to the filmmakers and actors. "I think Ted has an original and fresh voice," says producer Adam Fields, who brought the young writer's script to Fox 2000 Pictures. "Merging a sense of dark humor to the gruesome subject of cannibalism was a novel idea and provided the basis for an interesting project.

"Ted's screenplay had mature, adult characters," adds Fields, "the kind we rarely see in scary movies. It reminded me of 'The Shining' and 'The Thing', with, of course, overtones of the Donner Party incident."

Director Antonia Bird brings out this vision and unique brand of humor. "The story cannot be categorized," says Bird. "It is energetic and fast-paced, with a very strong, satirical edge and dark humor. So it's really a mix of many things: adventure story, 'whodunnit' and satire."

Robert Carlyle appreciated the questions posed by Griffin's screenplay. "What attracted me to the script," he explains, "was the notion of cannibalism – would you do it or not? Would anybody, in any given situation succumb to cannibalism if he or she was suffering from the kind of insatiable hunger described in the Indian legend?"

Several of the actors found much to admire in the screenplay's surprising wit and humor. Says David Arquette: "What appealed to me about the story and my character was that he was really kind of 'out there' for a period piece. It was fun to play with that kind of humor."

"I was a little dubious about making a 'horror' film," says Guy Pearce. "But I really appreciated RAVENOUS' uniqueness. We tried to give it an odd sense of humor and irony, which we thought would add a lot of fun to the film."

Jeffrey Jones had a similar reaction. "When I read the script I thought 'Well this is really peculiar'," he recalls. "And then I began to realize it was funny. In fact, it's scary and funny, which is an irresistible combination." Adds Jeremy Davies: "RAVENOUS has a very subversive humor, which kind of sneaks up on you. It has a strange, dark pocket that really appealed to me. It has a sly humor, so you don't play it with a neon sign on your head." Echoing Davies and adding an appropriate description,

Neal McDonough claims that the actors "all had the chance to sink their teeth into RAVENOUS, which makes the ensemble that much more interesting to watch."

Bird's skill in handling actors impressed the cast. RAVENOUS is Carlyle's fourth collaboration with the director, and he was pleased at the opportunity to reunite with her. "The fact that we've worked together so many times tells you all you need to know about how I feel about Antonia as a director and, especially, as a person," he says. "She has a fantastic ability, particularly with men, to pull out a sensitive or vulnerable side."

Guy Pearce shares his co-star's feelings about their director. "Antonia has a wonderful ability to get inside the character's head. That was particularly important for me because the audience sees the film largely through Boyd's perspective. That really helped Antonia and me flesh out the character."

Bird, who hails from a family of thespians, "has a real understanding for and love of actors," according to producer David Heyman. "She is passionate and protective of them, and brings out things I haven't seen many other directors do."

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION...

While RAVENOUS is set in California's Sierra Nevadas, it was decided early on that filming there would have been prohibitively expensive. The production scouted locations in Canada before deciding on the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Mexico. "We were looking for a location that could stand in for the Sierra Nevadas," comments executive producer Tim Van Rellim. "And of course, the crews would have to be good. So we were very lucky to find both in the Czech Republic."

One aspect of working in the former Czechoslovakia that wasn't so smooth was the weather. As originally conceived, RAVENOUS was set in a snowy landscape But after a brief delay in production, the weather had changed significantly, and the script was re-written to take place without the winter powder. "It became a 'green' picture," laughs Heyman, "and that's how we proceeded."

"Our weather changed *dramatically*," emphasizes Van Rellim. "It could change from day to day, sometimes even within the day. It made for a very challenging and fluid shooting schedule."

The resourceful creative and production teams found a way to turn this climatic unpredictability to their advantage. During the final week of production, snow again began to fall heavily. "So we returned to making a 'snow' picture, with a bit of 'green' thrown it," Heyman explains. "It returned the picture to its original vision, which made us all very happy."

ABOUT THE CAST...

Born in England, GUY PEARCE (*Boyd*) has demonstrated his strong range in both drama and comedy in several motion pictures. He is best known for his role as Detective Ed Exley from the critically lauded ensemble drama, "L.A. Confidential." Pearce made an international impression as the young drag queen in "The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert."

His additional credits include the feature films "Flynn" and "Hunting," and the made-for-television film "Snowy River: The McGregor Saga."

Pearce will next be starring in "A Slipping Down Life."

ROBERT CARLYLE (*Colqhoun/Ives*) starred in the 1997 hit "The Full Monty," released by Fox Searchlight Pictures. His portrayal of Gaz, an unemployed steel worker trying to put his life together, won raves around the world. Prior to "The Full Monty," Carlyle garnered stellar reviews as the psychopath Begbie, in Danny Boyle's "Trainspotting."

RAVENOUS marks Carlyle's fourth collaboration with director Antonia Bird. The pair had previously released the provocative drama "Priest," as well as "Face" and "Safe."

The Scottish born Carlyle also appeared in Ken Loach's "Riff Raff" and "Carla's Song," Michael Winterbottom's "Go Now," and will soon be starring in Alan Parker's "Angela's Ashes" opposite Emily Watson.

DAVID ARQUETTE (*Cleaves*) will soon be seen starring with Drew Barrymore in the Twentieth Century Fox release "Never Been Kissed." A fixture on the independent film scene, Arquette has put together an impressive body of work. He is best known, however, for his recurring role as Officer Dewey from "Scream" and "Scream 2," for which he won a Blockbuster award.

His other notable film credits include "Dream With the Fishes," which he also produced, "Johns," "The Alarmist," "Beautiful Girls," "Airheads," "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and the upcoming "Muppets In Space." Other future projects include "The Front Man" and the title role of Darby Crash in the biographical feature film "What We Do Is Secret."

He is currently on stage in Los Angeles at the Tiffany Theatre performing the lead roll of Frank-n-Furter in the 25th anniversary revival of Richard O'Brien's "Rocky Horror Show."

When not acting, he performs with his band Ear 2000. The song "The Race" is featured on the "Scream 2" soundtrack.

JEREMY DAVIES (*Toffler*) won critical acclaim for his role as a confused young man in the controversial film, "Spanking the Monkey." His other credits include the novice soldier in Steven Spielberg's "Saving Private Ryan," "Twister," "Going All The Way" and "Nell."

JEFFREY JONES (*Hart*) is one of the most popular character actors working today. He is best known for his many film roles, including "Ferris Bueller's Day Off," "Ed Wood," "Beetlejuice," "The Hunt for Red October," "Houseguest," "The Crucible" and "Valmont."

RAVENOUS marks Jones' second film shot in Prague, as he played Emperor Joseph II in Milos Forman's multiple Academy Award-winning "Amadeus."

JOHN SPENCER (*General Slauson*) is a veteran actor who has appeared in numerous films including "The Negotiator," "Copland," "The Rock," "Green Card," "Sea of Love" and "Black Rain." He is also known for his portrayal of Tommy Mullaney from the long running, critically acclaimed television series "L.A. Law."

STEPHEN SPINELLA (*Knox*) first burst onto the scene in the HBO drama "And the Band Played On." He has since appeared in diverse films such as "Great Expectations," "The Jackal" and "Love! Valour! Compassion!"

NEAL MCDONOUGH (*Reich*) appeared as Lt. Hawk in the highly successful feature film "Star Trek: First Contact." He has worked extensively in television movies including Robin Cook's "Invasion," "Babe Ruth," "Jack Reed: Badge Of Honor" and Scott Turow's "The Burden Of Proof."

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS...

ANTONIA BIRD (*Director*) has directed some of the most riveting and controversial films to come out of Great Britain. "Priest," which co-starred Robert Carlyle, was critically hailed around the world. She also collaborated with Carlyle on "Face" and the award-winning "Safe."

Bird made her U.S. directorial debut with "Mad Love," starring Drew Barrymore and Chris O'Donnell. Her other credits include "With Apparent Motive" and the British television series "The Men's Room" and "Inspector Morse."

TED GRIFFIN (*Writer*) was born and raised in Pasadena, California. His grandfather was motion picture director William A. Seiter, whose credits included "Room Service," starring the Marx Brothers, and "Sons of the Desert." Griffin's grandmother, Marion Nixon, was a silent film actress.

Griffin attended Colgate University, graduating in 1993. RAVENOUS and "Best Laid Plans," the latter to be released by Fox Searchlight Pictures, are his first produced screenplays. He is now working on additional screenplays for Fox.

ADAM FIELDS (*Producer*) joined Polygram Pictures at age 24; within a year he was named the company's Executive Vice President of Production, supervising pictures such as "An American Werewolf in London," "Six Weeks," "Missing" and "Endless Love."

Fields was executive producer on the hugely successful soundtrack album and hit single for "Endless Love," and supervised the triple-platinum soundtrack for "Flashdance."

Fields next moved to Universal Pictures, where he oversaw such popular films as "16 Candles" and "The Breakfast Club." He then established his own production company, producing and executive-producing "Vision Quest," "Johnny Be Good," "Great Balls of Fire," "Money Train" and other films. Fields later became president of Peters Entertainment, where he developed and packaged numerous projects, including "Rosewood" and the upcoming "The Wild, Wild West."

Fields also created the innovative and enormously successful startup company, Preview Tech, a multimedia marketing system that put theatrical movie trailers on the in-store monitors of mass electronics retailers throughout the country.

Fields is currently developing a number of projects under his own banner. As production began on RAVENOUS, principal photography was completing in the Philippines on another project he was producing, "Brokedown Palace," a drama starring Claire Danes, Kate Beckinsale and Bill Pullman, which will be released by Fox this summer.

DAVID HEYMAN (*Producer*) was born in England, and attended college in the United States. During his stay in the U.S. he was an executive at Warner Bros. and United Artists before becoming a producer. Among his credits as producer are the gritty urban drama "Juice" and the critically hailed independent film "The Daytrippers." He was executive producer on the soundtracks for both films, with "Juice" going platinum.

Heyman then returned to the U.K. where he formed the production company Heyday Films, which serves as a bridge to U.S. and U.K. productions. His next film is "I Am Legend."

TIM VAN RELLIM (*Executive Producer*) has enjoyed a distinguished career in the U.S. and European film industries.

His long association with producer Jeremy Thomas resulted in the feature films "Le Seour Brontes," "Bad Timing" and "Eureka." He was sole producer on the films "Transformation," "Horrid Intermissions," "Crusin,"" and "A Pattern of Roses," in which he discovered Helena Bonham Carter, giving the actress her first screen role.

Van Rellim's more recent credits include "The Last Place On Earth," the story of the discovery of the South Pole, the cult comedy "Eat the Rich," "The Deceivers," "Honour Bound," "K2," "Viking Sagas," and "Snow White – A Tale of Terror."

Van Rellim is currently preparing his next project, "The Sin Eater," for Twentieth Century Fox, written and directed by Brian Helgeland.

ANTHONY B. RICHMOND, B.S.C. (*Director of Photography*) has over 40 films to his credit, including "Playing God," "Bastard Out of Carolina," "First Kid," "Tales From the Hood," "The Man Who Fell to Earth," "Don't Look Now" and "The Eagle Has Landed."

Australian born BRYCE PERRIN (*Production Designer*) has created the look for films such as "Claudine's Return," "Nevada" and "The Sound of One Hand Clapping," which was in competition at the Berlin International Film Festival. Perrin also worked as art director on "Legends of the Fall" and "Old Gringo."

NEIL FARRELL (*Editor*) was the editor on Kenneth Branagh's "Hamlet" and "A Midwinter's Tale."

MICHAEL NYMAN & DAMON ALBARN composed the music for RAVENOUS. A prolific composer, Nyman created soundtracks for such films as Peter Greenaway's "The Draughtman's Contract" and "The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" and Jane Campion's "The Piano." His other motion picture credits include "Six Days, Six Nights," and director Patrice Leconte's "Monsieur Hire" and "The Hairdresser's Husband." Nyman provided a forty minute symphony for Campion's "Portrait of a Lady," starring Nicole Kidman.

Damon Albarn is vocalist and songwriter for the hugely successful British band Blur, which is also comprised of Graham Coxon, Alex James and Dave Rowntree. The group's albums include Leisure, Parklife, Modern Life Is Rubbish, The Great Escape and their recent and largest international hit, Blur. Their new single "Tender," followed by a new album, will be released shortly.

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FOX 2000 PICTURES PRESENTS AN ADAM FIELDS/HEYDAY FILMS PRODUCTION "RAVENOUS" GUY PEARCE ROBERT CARLYLE JEREMY DAVIES
JEFFREY JONES JOHN SPENCER STEPHEN SPINELLA NEAL McDONOUGH AND DAVID ARQUETTE MUSIC COMPOSED BY MICHAEL NYMAN & DAMON ALBARN
SCORE CONDUCTED BY MICHAEL NYMAN FILM EDITOR NEIL FARRELL PRODUCTION DESIGNER BRYCE PERRIN DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY ANTHONY B. RICHMOND, B.S.C. EXECUTIVE PRODUCER TIM VAN RELLIM

R RESTRICTED UNDER 17 REQUIRES ACCOMPANYING PARENT OR ADULT GUARDIAN

DOLBY

PRODUCED BY ADAM FIELDS DAVID HEYMAN WRITTEN BY TED GRIFFIN DIRECTED BY ANTONIA BIRD

SOUNDTRACK ON VIRGIN RECORDS

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